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## RELIGIOUS WORK AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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THOMAS S. EVANS

General Secretary of the Young Men's Christian Association, the University  
of Pennsylvania

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The University of Pennsylvania has an enrolment of over five thousand students and a faculty of five hundred and thirty members divided into the following eight departments: Liberal Arts, Science, Finance and Commerce, Medicine, Law, Dentistry, Veterinary Medicine, and Graduate School. Almost all of the students are men, and the cosmopolitan character of the institution is best illustrated in the fact that there are two hundred and twenty-five foreign students, representing over forty different nations outside of the United States.

The conditions are the more complex because the university is situated in the midst of the great city of Philadelphia. To meet the moral and religious needs of such an institution demands a great variety of activities. The traditions of the institution are distinctly Christian, as is shown in the fact that the first Provosts were Christian ministers, and the custom of daily chapel has continued through the entire history of the institution to the present time.

In view of the history of the university and the complexity of its conditions, it is most interesting to find that the Young Men's Christian Association with its intercollegiate and world-wide affiliations has thus far shown itself to be the best agency for organizing the religious, ethical, and social work of the institution.

The religious activities naturally fall under the three main divisions of worship, study, and service. Under the head of worship is the service held on Sunday morning at eleven o'clock and conducted by leading Christian ministers and laymen of this and other countries. At this service the average attendance last year was 288, varying from 108 to 1,025. The daily chapel service, held each

morning at 8:30 o'clock, and conducted by university professors and ministers of the city, had an average attendance of 56. Both of these exercises are most effective in their spiritual intensity, the five-minute address given each week-day morning being of the highest order.

In the department of study are the groups for the discussion of physical, social, ethical, and religious problems. The work is done on the basis of the Bible and from a world-wide point of view, and, therefore, includes foreign missions. These groups are not conducted by immature undergraduates, but in most cases are led by university professors, ministers of Philadelphia, strong laymen of churches, and experienced association secretaries. Last year there were in the university sixty-six of these groups, with a total enrolment of 1,256. A group usually consists of from six to ten members, meeting weekly in a dormitory house, a fraternity house, a near-by church, or in one of the classrooms of the university.

The approach to the Bible is not through a study of the history, authorship, contents, and teachings of Scripture, but rather by the method of discovering the moral, physical, social, and religious problems of the students and leading them to see that the final answer to these problems is to be found in the Christianity of the Bible. The number of these groups that can be formed and the interest among the undergraduates seems to be limited only by the number of competent leaders who can be secured.

In the department of study are also lectures in the various department buildings by national leaders in the field of sex hygiene, college ethics, social work, foreign missions, and religious principles. Almost invariably these leaders draw a large attendance and sometimes change the current of undergraduate opinion on important matters.

One of the most vital problems of modern student religious work is that of the relationship of the church to the work done among students by special organizations such as the Young Men's Christian Association. For many years the Association was careless with regard to its loyalty to the church and gave inadequate attention to the matter of bringing students into vital relationship to the church of their choice. At the present time the intercol-

legiate Association is taking up this problem with vigor, and is realizing, as never before, its constant responsibility to the church and the necessity of closely identifying all of its activities with the final organized form of Christianity in the church itself. In a cosmopolitan university like Pennsylvania, situated in the midst of the churches of a great city, the problem is most complex. At Pennsylvania something more than twenty different religious denominations are represented in the university body. Each year the Christian Association tries to ascertain, through a careful census, the religious connections and preferences of the new students and places the lists thus obtained in the hands of the local churches and denominational leaders. In the larger denominations—Presbyterian, Episcopal, Methodist, and Lutheran—the Association has employed denominational church secretaries who are either ministers or men of maturity and experience in Christian work. These secretaries co-operate with the local ministers and leaders of religious organizations in the city of Philadelphia.

This method of dealing with the church question from within the university seems to be quite satisfactory to the leaders of the religious denominations in Philadelphia. It has the additional merit of greatly strengthening the internal organization of the Christian Association and presenting to the non-religious element a united Christian appeal. The student Young Men's Christian Association regards itself simply as the agent of the church within the university community. At a recent meeting of the Board of Directors the following series of resolutions were adopted as indicating the policy of the Christian Association at the University of Pennsylvania:

*Resolved first*, That the Christian Association of the University of Pennsylvania, with the approval of the Provost of the University, hereby reaffirms its loyalty to the Christian church and its eagerness to promote the cause of organized Christianity.

*Resolved second*, That the Association hereby extends to the properly constituted representatives of every organized religious body the machinery of its organization for the purpose of furthering the efforts of such body to reach its members and adherents within the student community of the University.

*Resolved third*, That the Association will elect to its Secretarial Staff any duly accredited worker representing such a religious body jointly selected by

it and by the Association, with the understanding that the salary received by him for work done in the University shall be paid through the treasury of the Association.

*Resolved fourth*, That the Association is willing to become responsible to any organized religious body for the work of the representative of such body within the University, and to make reports as desired concerning his service, and to make reports not only concerning his special service but on all the work which the Association itself is doing in any way on behalf of the religious body in question.

*Resolved fifth*, That the Association is willing to report to any religious body concerning the work done on behalf of its students in case such body does not have or does not desire to have a representative within the University other than the regular Association secretaries.

Both branches of the Lutheran church in Philadelphia have appointed a joint co-operative committee which has been working with the Association in taking care of the Lutheran students. The bishop of the Methodist Episcopal church has accepted its suggestion and appointed the minister of the nearest Methodist church to its staff of secretaries. The Protestant Episcopal church, through the bishop, has been co-operating most heartily for several years. Last spring there was held under the auspices of the Christian Association a conference of Episcopal students of the Middle Atlantic states. The Association has been able to serve the Roman Catholic church through the archbishop and the local parish priest. It has also been able to co-operate with the Young Men's Hebrew Association in caring for the Hebrew students. In this way the Association has come into relation with most of the religious bodies represented in the student body.

In these days of "social service" the Association very naturally places a great deal of emphasis on the Social Service Department of the work. The University Settlement of Philadelphia is owned and conducted by the Christian Association and maintains all of the activities of a modern social settlement, including kindergarten, industrial classes, boys', girls', men's, and mothers' clubs, library, dramatics, indoor and outdoor athletics, lectures, entertainments, religious meetings, neighborhood improvement, dispensary, savings bank, children's playground, training conferences for social workers, and a special farm for camping during the summer season. There

are ten residents and about one hundred and fifty volunteer workers each year. The Social Service Department also includes special lectures in the different departments of the university, group discussions of social work led by the social experts of Philadelphia, and periodical dinners within the university, where addresses are made on the general subject of the Relationship of University Trained Men to Social Service. A very interesting phase of this work is that of the actual service done by the students under the auspices of the various religious, social, and philanthropic societies of Philadelphia. Last year something over sixty students were engaged in teaching foreigners, acting as "Boy Scouts," directing the moral training in public schools, assisting the social service department of the University Hospital, teaching Sunday-school classes, and visiting the various preparatory schools in this vicinity. This Social Service Department has the double objective of giving expression to the religious spirit and discovering for many men the need of the religious motive in their personal lives if they are to be successful in social work. Under the general head of Social Service within the university community should also be mentioned the Student Employment Bureau, which in its own way furnishes financial assistance to more than one hundred students each year, and the Student Loan Library, which provides textbooks for students who are unable to secure them for themselves.

Another main department of the work is that usually classified under the head of Foreign Missions. In promoting this work the devotional element is called for in prayer, the study element in the mission classes, while the ultimate object is actually to place men in service throughout the world. Pennsylvania has at the present time about forty alumni working as missionaries in foreign countries. The Student Volunteer Band and the Missionary Secretary are constantly at work securing new "volunteers."

But the unique work which Pennsylvania is doing in the foreign field is in the Medical School, Hospital, and Dispensary which are being established at Canton, China. Four medical graduates of the university, together with other members of the staff, are working with the Canton Christian College and the missionary societies of South China, in building up a Christian Medical School. This

particular undertaking has stimulated an interest in foreign missions throughout the entire university community. In connection with this foreign work, a special effort is being made to influence the two hundred foreign students who are at present in the university. Social gatherings, lectures, and discussions are provided in order to bring these foreigners into friendly and intimate relations with North American customs and Christian civilization.

This complex work, conducted under the auspices of the Young Men's Christian Association, requires an annual budget of \$35,000, and is heartily supported by the students, faculty, and alumni of the university. The staff of six secretaries is made up of mature men thoroughly trained for the different departments of the work. This unified, spontaneous religious organization seems to be meeting the needs of the university, as is indicated in the fact that there are no other religious organizations within the university community. The intercollegiate and world-wide affiliations bring to the organization a wealth of experience and a source of inspiration which is constantly felt.

If the day shall arrive when the prayer of the Lord Jesus Christ that "they all may be one" shall be realized in a united Christian church, the student Young Men's Christian Association can rejoice in being once more absorbed in the original church which it is striving to serve and from which it derives its inspiration and support.